

**PUBLIC ADVISORY**

**ON PHASING OUT OF HANDWRITTEN PASSPORTS**

Indian citizens living in India and abroad are advised to urgently replace their handwritten passports with machine-readable passports. **A deadline of the 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2015 for globally phasing out of all non-Machine Readable Passports (MRPs) was set up by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).** Thereafter, foreign Governments may deny Visa or entry to any person travelling on a non-Machine Readable Passport.

2. The Government of India has been issuing Machine Readable Passports since 2001. The Passports, however, issued before 2001 and particularly those issued during mid 1990s with a validity of 20 years will fall in the category of non-MRPs. By the end of July 2016, it was estimated that there are approximately 2.10 lakh handwritten passports still in circulation. Approximately 6.20 crore Indians hold valid passports.

**3. Indian citizens residing in India and abroad and holding such passports with validity beyond 24<sup>th</sup> November 2015 are advised to apply for re-issue of their passports** immediately in order to avoid any inconvenience in obtaining valid visa or international travel. Needless to mention, travel on ICAO-compliant machine readable passports will facilitate hassle-free and safe journey.

4. All Passport Issuing Authorities have instituted a simple and fast-track procedure for renewal of passports. For more details related to passport services, website - **www.passportindia.gov.in** - or the National Call Centre (**1800-258-1800 - Toll Free**) may be accessed. Indian citizens living abroad should visit the website of respective Indian Mission/Post.

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